

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ALGIER 00905 01 OF 02 071452Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00  
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00  
AGRE-00 CU-02 /087 W  
-----071610Z 102325 /46

R 071320Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6246  
INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
CINCUEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ALGIERS 0905

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AG  
SUBJECT: THE ALGERIAN POLITICAL SCENE: A PERIOD OF HESITATION

1. SUMMARY: AFTER MAJOR EFFORT OVER PAST 18 MONTHS TO  
LEGITIMIZE ITSELF THROUGH SETTING UP OF SOCIALIST INSTI-  
TUTIONS, ALGERIAN REGIME HAS RECENTLY APPEARED INEPT AND  
UNCERTAIN IN ITS POLITICAL DEALINGS AND HAS OFFERED  
LITTLE IN WAY OF PRESCRIPTIONS FOR SOLVING VEXING ECONOMIC  
PROBLEMS. PUBLIC REACTION TO THIS INDECISIVENESS HAS BEEN  
BOREDOM AND DISAPPOINTMENT, BUT LEVEL OF DISCONTENT  
NOT DIRECT THREAT TO REGIME'S SECURITY. IT MAY BE THAT  
MODERATES ARE SCORING SOME POINTS IN POLITICAL INFIGHTING  
WHICH INSTITUTION-BUILDING EXERCISE PRODUCED AND THAT  
THERE WILL BE SOME RECASTING OF PRIORITIES WITHIN  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ALGIER 00905 01 OF 02 071452Z

FRAMEWORK OF SOCIALIST OPTION. END SUMMARY.

2. REGIME INEPTITUDE: FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, INDECISION AND DRIFT  
HAVE BEEN HALLMARKS OF ALGERIAN POLITICAL PROCESS. PROMINENT  
EXAMPLES ARE:

A. CONFUSION SURROUNDING REDUCTION OF SENTENCES FOR

WESTERNERS JAILED HERE ON DRUG, "ECONOMIC ESPIONAGE" AND OTHER CHARGES. BUREAUCRATIC BUNGLING AND REGIME INFIGHTING ACCOMPANYING THIS "UNILATERAL GESTURE OF GOODWILL" TOWARDS WEST SOURED MOST OF COUNTRIES INTENDED AS BENEFICIARIES OF ALGERIAN LARGESSE.

B. POSTPONEMENT OF NATIONAL POPULAR ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. POSTPONEMENT RESULT OF EARLIER MIDJUDGMENT OF FACTS OF GRASS ROOTS POLITICAL LIFE AND PERHAPS OF SENTIMENTS WITHIN ELITE AS WELL. ELECTIONS SUBSEQUENTLY WENT OFF SMOOTHLY, IF WITHOUT GREAT POPULAR ENTHUSIASM, BUT QUESTIONS AS TO POLITICAL JUDGMENT OF THOSE IN CHARGE REMAINED.

C. CUBILLO-GRAPO FIASCO. BROADCAST FROM ALGIERS OF GRAPO COMMUNIQUE BY CANARY ISLANDS LIBERATION MOVEMENT HCUBILLO LED TO MINOR CRISIS IN ALGERIAN-SPANISH RELATIONS. ALGERIANS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN, AND TO REMAIN, UNAWARE OF FUROR GRAPO COMMUNIQUE BROADCAST WOULD CAUSE IN SPAIN AND THEREFORE ALLOWED SECOND-RATE ZLIBERATION MOVEMENT" LEADER TO DAMAGE AN IMPORTANT BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

D. ISLAMIC MILITANCY: HERE AGAIN, REGIME UNABLE TO MAKE UP ITS MIND. ARABIZATION OF STREET AND SHOP SIGNS, ANNOUNCED WITH MUCH FANFARE LAST FALL, HAS BEEN PARTIALLY REVERSED OR SIMPLY NOT CARRIED OUT, AND WINTER'S DECISION TO TRIPLE WINE PRICES WAS REVERSED EARLY THIS MONTH.

3. SLOW PACE: IN ADDITION TO UNCHARACTERISTIC POLITICAL INEPTITUDE, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ALGIER 00905 01 OF 02 071452Z

GENERAL PACE OF ALGERIAN ACTIVITY HAS SLOWED. STANDARD EXPLANATION FOR SLOWDOWN HAS BEEN THAT PREOCCUPATION WITH SOCIALIST INSTITUTION BUILDING HAS FORCED NEGLECT OF OTHER ASPECTS OF RUNNING COUNTRY. SURGE OF ACTIVITY HAD BEEN PREDICTED FOR POST-ASSEMBLY ELECTION PERIOD.

4. DESPITE THESE PREDICTIONS, THERE HAS BEEN NO SURGE IN SIX WEEKS SINCE ELECTIONS. LONG-AWAITED MINISTERIAL RESHUFFLE IS STILL AWAITED, AND REGIME IS DAWDLING OVER DECISION AS TO WHETHER TO ALLOW MINISTERS ELECTED TO ASSEMBLY TO RETAIN THEIR CABINET POSITIONS. REPORTS OF REGIME INFIGHTING AND OF SPLIT BETWEEN BOUMEDIENE AND VARIOUS OF HIS COLLEAGUES CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE.

5. BOUMEDIENE'S STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS MARCH 31 (ALGIERS 867) WAS AT ONCE SELF-CONGRATULATORY AND HORATIVE, BUT DID NOT SPELL OUT PROGRAM FOR COUNTERING NATIONAL ILLS. REGIME IS ATTEMPTING TO MAKE ADDRESS A HISTORIC DOCUMENT WHICH, LIKE NATIONAL

CHARTER, WILL BE OBJECT OF STUDY AND INTERPRETATION BY FAITHFUL, BUT GENRAL REACTION TO IT HAS BEEN BOREDOM AND DISAPPOINTMENT.

6. TROUBLE AHEAD: REGIME IS BACKING AND FILLING IN FACE OF SEVERAL UNPLEASANT PROBLEMS, SOME NEW, SOME PERENNIAL. FOLLOWING APPEAR TO US TO BE AMONG MOST DIFFICULT:

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ALGIER 00905 02 OF 02 071433Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00  
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00  
AGRE-00 CU-02 /087 W  
-----071609Z 102107 /46

R 071320Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6247  
INFO AMEMBASY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
AMEMBASSY MADRID  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ALGIERS 0905

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

A. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SLOWING: DIFFICULTIES IN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, SHOWPIECE OF ALGERERIAN REVOLUTION, APPEAR PARTICULARLY SEVERE AT MOMENT. LARGE SONATRACH PROJECTS FACE MAJOR DELAYS, AND PAYMENTS SQUEEZE SEEMS MORE ACUTE THAN USUAL. ONE MAJOR LENDER TO GOA REPORTS THAT, FOR FIRST TIME IN RECENT MEMORY, SONATRACH HAS FALLEN SIX MONTHS BEHIND IN ITS PAYMENTS, AND SMALL COMPANIES PROVIDING SERVICES HERE REPORT INCREASING DIFFICULTY IN GETTING THEIR MONEY. SONATRACH DIFFICULTIES VARIOUSLY ATTRIBUTED TO BUREAUCRATIC ARGUMENTS WITH BANKS, GENUINE FINANCIAL SQUEEZE, AND SIMPLE CONFUSION, BUT WHATEVER CAUSE,

IMPRESSION OF STAGNATION REMAINS.

B. DROUGHT: INDICATIONS CONTINUE TO MOUNT THAT  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ALGIER 00905 02 OF 02 071433Z

ALGERIA IN LINE FOR FAIR TO POOR HARVEST AT BEST  
(ALGIERS 827). RESULTING NECESSITY TO INCREASE  
CEREAL PURCHASES ABROAD WILL BE COSTLY FOR DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM AND WILL FURTHER DISCREDIT FALTERING AGRARIAN  
REVOLUTION.

C. PRICES: DESPITE USUAL REGIME RHETORIC ABOUT ITS  
BATTLES AGAINST SPECULATORS AND MIDDLEMEN, FOOD PRICES  
REMAIN HIGH. DROUGHT AND REPORTED HOOF AND MOUTH  
DISEASE OUTBREAK MAY CAUSE TEMPORARY DROP IN  
MEAT PRICES AS MORE CATTLE SLAUGHTERED, BUT NO LONG  
RUN SOLUTION TO MEET PRICE QUESTION IN SIGHT.

7. PUBLIC ATTITUDES: OUR LIMITED SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT  
PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS REGIME AND ITS PROBLEMS IS ONE  
OF GROWING DISENCHANTMENT BUT NOT REBELLION. THERE HAVE  
BEEN INSTANCES IN WHICH POPULAR DISCONTENT HAS SURFACED;  
RIOT AFTER ALGERIAN-TUNISIAN SOCCER MATCH, NOT INFREQUENT  
WILDCAT STRIKES, AND STUDENT PROTESTS OVER UNIVERSITY ISSUES  
ARE CASES IN POINT. AT HIGHER LEVELS OF SOCIETY, OPEN  
CRITICISM IN PRESENCE OF FOREIGNERS OF REGIME INCOMPETENCE  
AND CORRUPTION MORE COMMON NOW THAN IT WAS A YEAR  
AGO, AND WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT NUMBER OF EDUCATED  
ALGERIANS WHO HAVE DECIDED TO LEAVE COUNTRY TO SEEK PERSONAL  
AND PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION ELSEWHERE IS GROWING.

8. DISILLUSIONMENT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE THREAT TO  
REGIME'S POSITION AS YET. ALGERIANS APPEAR TO HAVE  
MEASURE OF POLITICAL STOCISM LEFT. REVOLUTIONARY ZEAL  
FADING AND BEING REPLACED BY SADDENING REALIZATION THAT  
ALGERIA MAY BE JUST ANOTHER UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY  
WITHOUT MAGICAL SOLUTIONS TO ITS DIFFICULTIES. WHILE  
THIS IS OF LONG-TERM CONCERN FOR REGIME, IT DOES NOT  
YET POSE CONCRETE THREAT.

9. AN OPENING TO THE WEST?: ONE KEY QUESTION WOULD  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ALGIER 00905 02 OF 02 071433Z

THUS SEEM TO BE: WHY IS FORMERLY DYNAMIC ALGERIAN REGIME,  
WHICH HAS JUST TAKEN STEPS TO LEGITIMIZE BOUMEDIENE'S  
RULE, NOT MOVING MORE VIGOROUSLY TO DEAL WITH ITS GROWING

PROBLEMS. POSSIBLE EXPLANATION, WHICH WE OFFER WITH SOME TREPIDATION, IS THAT WELL-PLACED CRITICS OF MILITANT ALGERIAN SOCIALISM, WHO IN PAST HAVE BEEN BRUSHED ASIDE, MAY BE HAVING GREATER IMPACT AS INADEQUACIES OF PRESENT SYSTEM BECOME MORE APPARENT. DURING SOCIALIST INSTITUTION BUILDING EXERCISE, THERE WAS STRUGGLE WITHIN REGIME AS TO WHAT SORT OF STATE ALGERIA SHOULD BE. IT MAY BE THAT MODERATE DID BETTER THAN IT ORIGINALLY APPEARED.

10. WHATEVER RESULT OF INFIGHTING MAY BE, REGIME HAS INDICATED INTEREST IN CLOSER COSMETIC AND SUBSTANTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH WEST IN GENERAL, AND WITH US IN PARTICULAR. IN COSMETIC AREA, ALGERIANS APPEAR MORE OPEN TO CONTACT WITH US, THROUGH NAMING AMBASSADOR AND OPENING DOORS TO OFFICIAL US VISITORS. REFLEXIVE MEDIA CRITICISM OF AMERICAN POLICIES MODERATING SOMEWHAT. SUBSTANTIVELY, REGIME HAS SHOWN ITSELF INTERESTED IN WIDER CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL LINKS AND IN HAVING US ASSISTANCE IN DEALING WITH ITS AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS. OFFICIALS NOW EVEN MENTION CLOSER COOPERATION IN FIELD OF MILITARY SUPPLY.

11. FOREGOING NOT INTENDED TO SUGGEST THAT ALGERIANS CONTEMPLATING ABANDONMENT OF SACRED SOCIALIST OPTION. COUNTRY'S BASIC POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ORIENTATIONS WILL CONTINUE TO RUN TO THIRD WORLD MILITANCY AND STATE-COMPANY SOCIALISM. WHAT MAY BE HAPPENING, HOWEVER, IS REORIENTATION OF SHORT-RUN PRIORITIES WITHIN THIS BROADER FRAMEWORK IN EFFORT TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO IMMEDIATE PRESSING PROBLEMS. LYNE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PROGRESS REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 07-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977ALGIER00905  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770121-0928  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** ALGIERS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19770480/aaaacrw.tel  
**Line Count:** 253  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 8ee0c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 10-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2876311  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ECT: THE ALGERIAN POLITICAL SCENE: A PERIOD OF HESITATION  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PINT, AG  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/8ee0c9a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009